

February 28, 2012

The Honorable Allen Green, Port Orange Mayor  
The Honorable Bob Pohlmann, Port Orange Vice Mayor  
The Honorable Bob Ford, District 1 Port Orange City Council Member  
The Honorable Don Burnette, District 2 Port Orange City Council Member  
The Honorable Dennis Kennedy, District 4 Port Orange City Council Member

Dear Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council:

On a Saturday evening in May, 1984, the City Council bestowed on me a great honor. They invited me to become the Port Orange City Manager. Little did I realize at that time that I would spend most of my professional career as the Port Orange City Manager. At that time, the Vice Mayor told me that I would not have to leave Port Orange in order to manage a larger City. I could stay here and grow with the City. Mayor Green, you were absolutely correct in your advice.

I have had the privilege of serving Port Orange as City Manager for almost 28 years. Port Orange is Virginia's and my home, not just where we live. Our three sons had the opportunity to attend Port Orange schools and all three graduated from Spruce Creek High School. That is a rarity for a City Manager. Our friends are here in Port Orange and Volusia County. We have become involved in our church and community life. Two of our three sons, their wives, and their children still live nearby.

During the past 28 years, you have allowed me and our organization to experiment with new concepts. In fact, you have encouraged me and the organization to think outside the box, try new things, look at issues differently, and find solutions to address community problems. You have allowed me to be involved in two International Exchanges (Australia and South Africa) and expose our community and our organization to International visitors (Australia, South Africa, Poland, Hungary, Romania and several other Eastern European Countries).

You have allowed me to be involved professionally in both FCCMA and ICMA. You have allowed me to speak at both national and state conferences. You have allowed me to serve on both the Executive Boards of FCCMA and ICMA and currently on the Alliance for Innovation Board of Directors. You have allowed me to teach at the University of Central Florida, Stetson University, National Fire Academy, VCOG's Elected Officials Training Program, Port Orange-South Daytona Chamber of Commerce Leadership Program and the Florida Fire Chief's Association Executive Officer Program. You have allowed me to express positions taken by the Port Orange City Council in a variety of venues, both within the State of Florida and outside the State of Florida. You have allowed me to publish two articles, one on financing stormwater projects and the other on emergency management.

In the past, I have been asked when I planned to retire. My response has always been the same, when it quits being fun. What I have found in recent days is the fire in the belly is not as intense as it once was. Although managing a city is still fun, it is not as much fun as it once was.

I have found myself thinking about other things I would like to do, places I would like to go, volunteer activities I would like to be involved in, projects that I have talked about doing but don't seem to have time to start and if started don't have time to complete. I have found myself thinking about being involved with the grandchildren and volunteering at their schools. I have

found myself thinking about being more involved in the Church where I worship. I have found myself thinking about building a deck and arbor in the backyard. I have found myself thinking about volunteering at the library and in other organizations.

I have found myself thinking about when would be the right day to make a retirement announcement. Until recently, retirement was not on my mind. In my almost 28 years in Port Orange my entire focus has been on the City and what our team could do each and every day to make Port Orange an even better community. Until my final day as the Port Orange City Manager that will remain my focus.

There are projects that I would like to see completed before I retire. However, I have come to the realization that there will always be another project that I will want to see to completion. Sometimes you realize that those projects you start will have to be completed by another. There are systems changes that I would like to see completed before I retire. I will work extremely hard over the next year making procedural changes that will strengthen the systems and make the organization stronger for the next manager.

Some will speculate on the timing of this letter. Let me end the speculation. I wanted to make the announcement well in advance of the City Council qualifying period so that there would be no speculation that I am retiring because of the election. I wanted to announce a date so that the City Council would have ample opportunity to determine the best method and have enough time to select a new City Manager. The date that I have selected will be before the intense budget process begins in 2013 for the FY 2013-14 Budget thereby allowing the new City Manager to develop the entire budget for City Council consideration.

I want to express my thanks and appreciation to you for allowing me to serve you and the citizens of Port Orange. Our citizens have elected excellent Mayors and City Councils throughout my entire tenure as City Manager. Each Mayor and each City Council Member has been more than somebody I work for. Each has become a friend. You and the City Councils before you have set the vision and direction for the City. Port Orange is truly a community that is unique by choice not by chance.

I want to express my appreciation to all the Department Heads who have led the Departments during my tenure as City Manager. The City of Port Orange has been extremely fortunate to have Department Heads who care about the City and for its citizens. The employees who work day in and day out for the citizens of Port Orange are simply the best. They are dedicated to delivering quality service to our citizens.

I have enjoyed working with and for the citizens of our City. The strength of Port Orange is its citizens and its neighborhoods. It is through direct involvement with our citizens that our City has been able to achieve so much. I have enjoyed going into virtually every one of our neighborhoods meeting with our residents. It has been gratifying to get to know so many people over the years.

It has been a privilege to work with the business leadership in our community. I appreciate the support that I have received from the entire business community.

I want to express my appreciation to my wife, Virginia. Almost 40 years ago, I came home one day and talked with her about applying for my first City Manager's job in Malvern, Arkansas. As we talked, we came to understand the ramifications of what it would mean to our marriage and our family. It meant more responsibility related to our family would fall on her. She willingly gave

up her career in order to provide me with the flexibility to be a City Manager. She has supported me in everything that I have done.

I want to express my thanks to my three sons, Clai, Jay, and Stewart, their wives, Alicia, Jane, and Melissa and the five, soon to be six, grandchildren. Being a City Manager impacts every member of the family. Vacations cancelled. Holiday activities delayed. Activities missed. Meals left on the stove. Even boarding up the house prior to a hurricane, handling insurance claims and removing trees and debris after a storm have all been handled by Virginia and the boys because preparation and recovery of the City has to be the priority of the City Manager.

God has been good to me. He has allowed me to achieve more in life than I could have ever imagined. I give Him thanks, praise and honor. He has been faithful to me, even when I haven't been faithful to Him, in so many ways.

Therefore, this is my notice to the Port Orange City Council that it is my intent to retire from active service with the City of Port Orange on February 28, 2013. It is my commitment to you to work as hard as I can to accomplish the goals that you established for me in my last performance review over the remaining 12 months. When I became the Port Orange City Manager, I pledged to that City Council that I would lovingly manage the City. I pledged to myself that when the day came when I would leave the City of Port Orange the City Council and the City would be recognized for its commitment to quality of life and quality of service. When you and future City Councils look back, hopefully, all of you will see that I have been a good steward of what was entrusted to me in May 1984.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kenneth W. Parker".

Kenneth W. Parker  
City Manager

c.c. Department Heads